

New and Emerging Occupations

Defining New and Emerging Occupations

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), which operates the Occupational Employment Statistics program, has not developed a precise definition of “new and emerging” occupations. Most recently, BLS has described new occupations as those “...created by changes in technology, society, markets or regulations...,” and emerging occupations as those that “...may also be created by existing occupations that have been substantially modified by the same changes, and are increasing in employment.”⁷ It’s not so much, “I’ll know it when I see it” as “new and emerging occupations are in the eye of the beholder.”

⁷ Crosby, Olivia. “New and Emerging Occupations.” Occupational Outlook Quarterly Fall 2002: pg. 17.

New and Emerging Occupations from National Studies

National Center for O*Net Development

The results of a pilot study of new and emerging occupations was conducted by the National Center for O*Net Development and published in March 2006.^a Focusing on three industries (Healthcare, Biotechnology and Geospatial Technology) considered high growth, it found five potential new and emerging occupations:

- Advanced practice nurse
- Bioinformation scientist
- Bioinformation technician
- Geospatial information systems scientist/technologist
- Geospatial information systems technician

BLS/OES surveys

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program collects data on new and emerging occupations by use of supplemental sheets as part of a larger survey.^b The following were identified in the 1993, 1996, and 1999 surveys.

- Bereavement counselor
- Quality assurance director
- Utilization review coordinator
- Volunteer coordinator
- Webmaster^c

Decennial Census

The U.S. Census is taken every 10 years and is a source for job titles (but not descriptions). The titles below were added to the census database following the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses^d:

- Artificial intelligence specialist
- Information technology specialist
- Ethics officer
- Human factors engineer
- Employee wellness coordinator

^a “New and Emerging (N&E) Occupations Methodology Development Report.” U. S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Workforce Investment, Skill Assessment Team, Washington, DC; submitted by the National Center for O*NET Development. March, 2006. <www.onetcenter.org>.

^b Pikulinski, Jerome. “New and Emerging Occupations.” May 2003. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Accessed September 14, 2006. <www.bls.gov/oes/2003/may/emerging.pdf3>.

^c This occupation was added to the SOC in 2000, under the title Network systems and data communications analyst.

^d Crosby, Olivia. “New and Emerging Occupations,” Occupational Outlook Quarterly, Fall 2002; pg. 19. Accessed October 30, 2006. <www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2002/fall/art02.pdf>.

One quality common to the definitions used in different studies is that the occupation fails to fit into an existing occupational classification. The BLS Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, administered in New Hampshire by the NHES Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, uses the Standard Occupational Classification system (SOC).⁸

When several employers in a particular industry report the same new occupation (for which a satisfactory SOC title cannot be found) on their OES survey, this may point to a new or emerging occupation. At first, these jobs tend to be put into a residual “all other” occupational classification which, when published, does not retain the specific title and description reported by employers. So, discussion about occupations is restricted to the emerging ones that retain a definition.

All Federal agencies that collect occupational data use the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) manual. It contains a more than 800 occupational titles with descriptions. It is currently being revised. No occupations have been added to the SOC since 2000. If a reported occupation is not included as a distinct detailed occupation, it is usually rolled into a residual, or “all other” occupation until it becomes apparent that it is unique enough to warrant its own specific occupational title and description.

⁸ Office of Management and Budget, (2000) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Manual. (2000 Ed.). Washington DC

Two states have performed studies on New and Emerging occupations:

Minnesota

A Minnesota study in 1998^a identified the following new and emerging jobs:

- Curriculum integration specialist
- Geographic information system (GIS) specialist
- Interactive specialist (testing website and software ease of use)
- Resident assessment specialist
- Restorative justice specialist

Texas

An ongoing Texas study^b which began in 2000 has identified the following new and emerging jobs:

- Direct broadcast satellite services technician
- Internet development specialist
- Multimedia specialist
- Videoserver technician
- Wireless communications technician

^a “New and Evolving Occupations.” August 1999. Research & Statistics Office, Minnesota Department of Economic Security. Accessed September 29, 2006. <www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/publications/neo.htm>.

^b “Emerging and Evolving Occupations in Texas.” Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market and Career Information. Accessed September 29, 2006. <www.cdr.state.tx.us/Researchers/emergingoverview.asp>.

Often, an occupation is reported as new in one industry when it actually can be found in other industries. In these cases, the existing classifications are used and the occupations are not considered new.

Survey Input from New Hampshire Employers

New Hampshire employers reported, on supplemental sheets on their Occupational Employment Survey questionnaires, from 2000 to 2006, the following occupations which did not fit an existing SOC (Standard Occupational Classification) code. New and emerging occupations are often defined as those jobs that do not meet a standard occupational classification system.

Survey/Occupation	Description
2000 Survey	
Transfer/recycling center attendant (also appeared in 2002 & 2003)	Direct the flow of refuse to the proper places Answer questions and monitor disposal of recyclables
Accounts administrator, or CORF (Comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation facility) coordinator	They deal with special billing issues in medical offices
Adult in-home caretaker/day program staff	In private homes, they provide social activities, recreation, and arts/crafts to adults with disabilities
2001 Survey	
Mortgage loan closer/officer	Facilitate the execution of documents necessary to complete the loan process
2002 and 2003 Surveys	
Technology center coordinator	Develops and maintains the center and devices used for people with disabilities
2004 Survey	
Healthcare specialist	Provides in-home respiratory care
Videoconferencing technician (includes Distance learning coordinator)	Set up, troubleshoot, and track videoconferencing technology
2005 Survey	
Emergency medicine/emergency room physician	This branch of medicine has evolved into a specialty
Warranty development managers/coordinators/specialist	Handles warranty paperwork in automobile dealerships
Animal rehabilitation specialist	Administers physical therapy to horses, dogs, and other pets